



Pew Bertarelli Ocean Legacy Project

Working together to create the world's first generation of great parks in the sea

Overview

The ocean plays an essential role in sustaining life on our planet. It covers nearly three-fourths of the globe and is home to nearly a quarter of the world's known species—and many more yet to be discovered. These waters also provide sustenance for billions of people.

Human activities, however, increasingly threaten the ocean's health. For example:

- About 1 in 5 fish caught in the wild is taken illegally or in unreported fisheries.¹
- From 1974 to 2015, the percentage of fish stocks fished at unsustainable levels tripled.²
- Populations of some of the top predatory fish species have declined by more than 90 percent from historic levels.³
- The ocean absorbs about a third of carbon dioxide emissions created from human activity. Acidification, caused by that absorption, is changing the chemistry of the ocean, placing sea life at risk.⁴

Research shows that large, fully protected marine reserves can help rebuild species abundance and diversity and protect the overall health of the marine environment,⁵ but only about 2 percent is highly or strongly protected—compared with about 15 percent of land.⁶

When Yellowstone National Park was established in 1872, it not only ensured protection for one of the most spectacular American landscapes, but it also provided a new way of thinking about protecting the environment. More recently this approach has been applied to oceans, accompanying a growing recognition of their essential role in sustaining life on the planet.

In 2006, The Pew Charitable Trusts and several partners launched the Global Ocean Legacy project in an effort to establish the world's first generation of great marine parks. In a decade of work with indigenous groups, community leaders, government officials, scientists, and other organizations, the campaign

supported the creation of nine major marine reserves, which will safeguard an area about twice the size of India.

But even with these successes, just a small fraction of the world's ocean has strong safeguards. To increase that protected area and build on a series of conservation wins, Pew and the Bertarelli Foundation forged a new partnership with the goal of increasing the number of large and fully protected parks in the sea to 15 by 2022.

About the Pew Bertarelli Ocean Legacy Project

The Pew Charitable Trusts and the Bertarelli Foundation joined forces in 2017 to create the Pew Bertarelli Ocean Legacy Project, with the shared goal of establishing the first generation of ecologically significant and effective marine protected areas around the world. This effort builds on a decade of work by both organizations to protect the ocean. Between them, they have helped to obtain designations to safeguard over 8 million square kilometers (3 million square miles) of ocean by working with philanthropic partners, indigenous groups, community leaders, government officials, and scientists. Since 2010, the Bertarelli Foundation has sought to protect the ocean for future generations through marine conservation and collaborative marine science research.

Endnotes

- 1 David J. Agnew et al., "Estimating the Worldwide Extent of Illegal Fishing," *PLOS ONE* 4, no. 2 (2009): e4570, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0004570>.
- 2 United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, "The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2018: Meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (2018), <http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/I9540EN/>.
- 3 International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-Like Species in the North Pacific Ocean, "2016 Pacific Bluefin Tuna Stock Assessment, Executive Summary" (2016), [https://www.iattc.org/Meetings/Meetings2016/SAC-07/PDFs/OTH-INF/_English/SAC-07-INF-C\(a\)_ISC-Pacific-Bluefin-Tuna-Stock-Assessment-Executive-Summary.pdf](https://www.iattc.org/Meetings/Meetings2016/SAC-07/PDFs/OTH-INF/_English/SAC-07-INF-C(a)_ISC-Pacific-Bluefin-Tuna-Stock-Assessment-Executive-Summary.pdf); Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, "Consideration of Proposals for Amendment of Appendices I and II" (2013), <https://www.cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/cop/16/prop/E-CoP16-Prop-17.pdf>.
- 4 Scott C. Doney et al., "Ocean Acidification: The Other CO₂ Problem," *Annual Review of Marine Science* 1 (2009): 169-92, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1146/annurev.marine.010908.163834>.
- 5 Sarah E. Lester et al., "Biological Effects Within No-Take Marine Reserves: A Global Synthesis," *Marine Ecology Progress Series* 384 (2009): 33-46, <https://www.int-res.com/abstracts/meps/v384/p33-46/>; Benjamin S. Halpern, "The Impact of Marine Reserves: Do Reserves Work and Does Reserve Size Matter?" *Ecological Applications* 13, no. 1 (2003): 117-37, [http://dx.doi.org/10.1890/1051-0761\(2003\)013\[0117:TOMRD\]2.0.CO;2](http://dx.doi.org/10.1890/1051-0761(2003)013[0117:TOMRD]2.0.CO;2).
- 6 U.N. Environment Programme, "Mapping the World's Special Places," accessed 2014, <https://www.unep-wcmc.org/featured-projects/mapping-the-worlds-special-places>.



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